

# MONTANA FISH WILDLIFE & PARKS

## MEPA/NEPA/23-1-110 MCA CHECKLIST

### **PART I. PROPOSED ACTION DESCRIPTION**

**1. Type of Proposed State Action**

FWP proposes to accept a land donation of approximately 9.6 acres of land within the boundaries of Giant Springs State Park from Source Giant Springs, Inc.

**2. Agency Authority for the Proposed Action**

FWP has authority to provide development and access for public recreation. **23-2-101 MCA.**

**3. Name of Project**

Source Giant Springs, Inc. Land Donation

**4. Name, Address and Phone Number of Project Sponsor (if other than the agency)**

**5. If Applicable:**

Estimated Construction/Commencement Date NA

Estimated Completion Date 3/15/03.

Current Status of Project Design (% complete) 90%

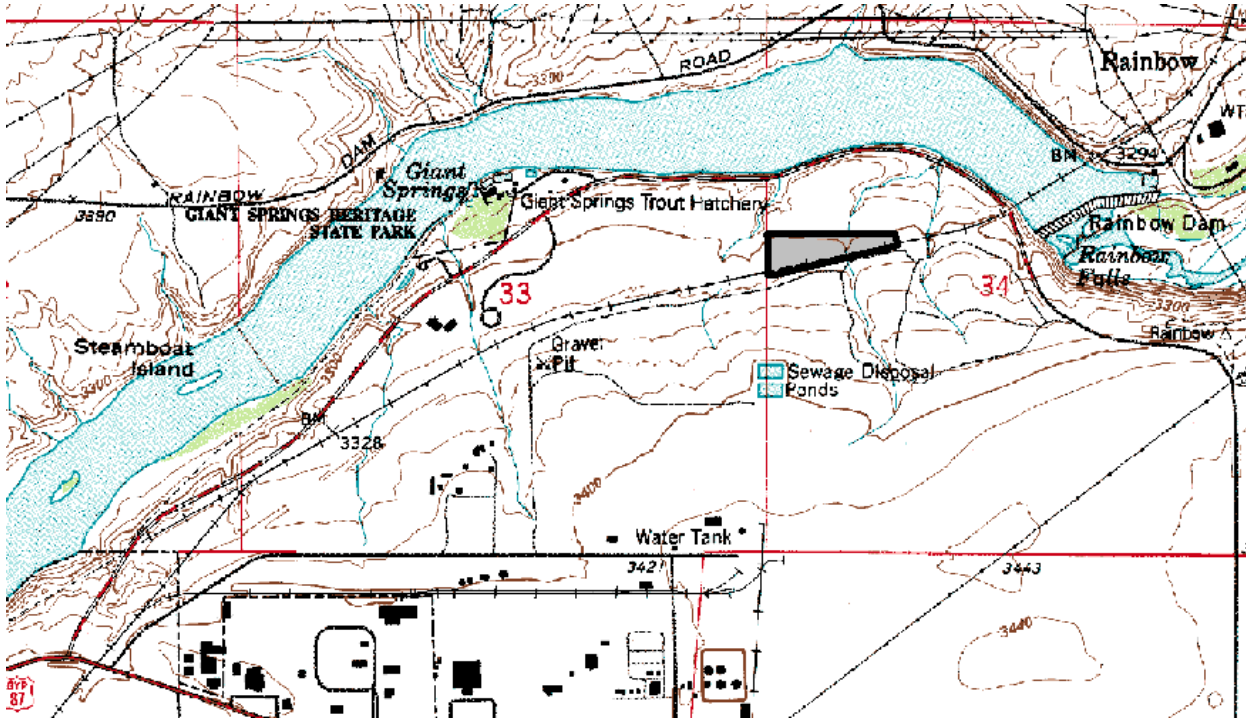
**6. Location Affected by Proposed Action (county, range and township)**

Cascade County, Sec 33, R4E, T21N

**7. Project Size: Estimate the number of acres that would be directly affected that are currently:**

- |     |                          |     |                         |          |       |
|-----|--------------------------|-----|-------------------------|----------|-------|
| (a) | Developed:               | (d) | Floodplain .....        | <u>0</u> | acres |
|     | residential .....        |     |                         |          |       |
|     | industrial .....         |     |                         |          |       |
| (b) | Open Space / Woodlands / | (e) | Productive:             |          |       |
|     | Recreation.....          |     | irrigated cropland..... | <u>0</u> | acres |
|     | <u>9.6094</u>            |     | dry cropland.....       | <u>0</u> | acres |
|     | acres                    |     | forestry .....          | <u>0</u> | acres |
|     |                          |     | rangeland.....          | <u>0</u> | acres |
|     |                          |     | other .....             | <u>0</u> | acres |
| (c) | Wetlands/Riparian        |     |                         |          |       |
|     | Areas .....              |     |                         |          |       |
|     | <u>0</u>                 |     |                         |          |       |
|     | acres                    |     |                         |          |       |

8. **Map/site plan:** attach an original 8 1/2" x 11" or larger section of the most recent USGS 7.5' series topographic map showing the location and boundaries of the area that would be affected by the proposed action. A different map scale may be substituted if more appropriate or if required by agency rule. If available, a site plan should also be attached.



9. **Narrative Summary of the Proposed Action or Project including the Benefits and Purpose of the Proposed Action.**

This project will allow Source Giant Springs, Inc. (SGSI) to fulfill their commitment to donate the inholding they own within the park boundaries. They have committed to donate this land in exchange for a waterline and other improvements provided to them at the Giant Springs Hatchery and in the park.

Source Giant Springs, Inc. has a water right to take water from the Giant Springs for their commercial bottling operations. Recent hatchery remodel construction efforts have resulted in the re-routing of numerous waterlines on-site.

In the spirit of continuing cooperation between Fish, Wildlife and Parks and SGS, the land is being donated to Fish, Wildlife and Parks as an addition to Giant Springs State Park for public benefit.

The donation insures that long term recreational and open space values will be retained in Giant Springs State Park. The lands already in the park will not be negatively impacted by any potential future development on these lands.

Visitors do not recognize the private nature of this property as it has been managed as park land for many years. Fish, Wildlife and Parks holds a trail easement on this property and the River's Edge

Trail transects the property. Visitors will not notice a change in management due to Fish, Wildlife and Parks owning the property.

**10. Listing of any other Local, State or Federal agency that has overlapping or additional jurisdiction.**

(a) Permits:  
Agency Name                      Permit                      Date Filed/#

None

(b) Funding:  
Agency Name                      Funding Amount  
Source Giant Springs, Inc.                      donation

(c) Other Overlapping or Additional Jurisdictional Responsibilities:  
Agency Name                      Type of Responsibility

None

## 11. List of Agencies Consulted During Preparation of the EA:

## **PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

### **PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT**

1. <u>LAND RESOURCES</u>  Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT <sup>3</sup>				Can Impact Be Mitigated <sup>3</sup>	Comment Index
	Unknown <sup>3</sup>	None	Minor <sup>3</sup>	Potentially Significant		
< a. Soil instability or changes in geologic substructure?		X				
b. Disruption, displacement, erosion, compaction, moisture loss, or over-covering of soil which would reduce productivity or fertility?		X				
< c. Destruction, covering or modification of any unique geologic or physical features?		X				
d. Changes in siltation, deposition or erosion patterns that may modify the channel of a river or stream or the bed or shore of a lake?		X				
e. Exposure of people or property to earthquakes, landslides, ground failure, or other natural hazard?		X				
f. Other		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

No changes in the tract's geologic or physical features will occur due to FWP ownership; the site will remain in it's present state.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

2. <u>AIR</u>  Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT <sup>3</sup>				Can Impact Be Mitigated <sup>3</sup>	Comment Index
	Unknown <sup>3</sup>	None	Minor <sup>3</sup>	Potentially Significant		
< a. Emission of air pollutants or deterioration of ambient air quality? (also see 13 (c))		X				
b. Creation of objectionable odors?		X				
c. Alteration of air movement, moisture, or temperature patterns or any change in climate, either locally or regionally?		X				
d. Adverse effects on vegetation, including crops, due to increased emissions of pollutants?		X				
e. <del>For P-R/D-J projects</del> , will the project result in any discharge which will conflict with federal or state air quality regs? (Also see 2a)		X				
f. Other		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Air Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

Ambient air quality will remain unchanged if FWP acquires this tract. Public roads or vehicle access do not contribute to the dust at this tract, nor is any construction anticipated which would alter ambient air quality.

### PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

3. <u>WATER</u>  Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT <sup>3</sup>				Can Impact Be Mitigated <sup>3</sup>	Comment Index
	Unknown <sup>3</sup>	None	Minor <sup>3</sup>	Potentially Significant		
< a. Discharge into surface water or any alteration of surface water quality including but not limited to temperature, dissolved oxygen or turbidity?		X				
b. Changes in drainage patterns or the rate and amount of surface runoff?		X				
c. Alteration of the course or magnitude of flood water or other flows?		X				
d. Changes in the amount of surface water in any water body or creation of a new water body?		X				
e. Exposure of people or property to water related hazards such as flooding?		X				
f. Changes in the quality of groundwater?		X				
g. Changes in the quantity of groundwater?		X				
h. Increase in risk of contamination of surface or groundwater?		X				
i. Effects on any existing water right or reservation?		X				
j. Effects on other water users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quality?		X				
k. Effects on other users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quantity?		X				
l. <del>For P-R/D-J</del> , will the project affect a designated floodplain? (Also see 3c)		X				
m. <del>For P-R/D-J</del> , will the project result in any discharge that will affect federal or state water quality regulations? (Also see 3a)		X				
n. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Water Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

Use of the land will not change with the change in ownership; therefore, the conditions of surface water quality or volumes, drainage patterns, quality or quantity of ground water, or water contamination potentials will not be altered. There are no water rights with the tract.

#### PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

4. <u>VEGETATION</u>  Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT <sup>3</sup>				Can Impact Be Mitigated <sup>3</sup>	Comment Index
	Unknown <sup>3</sup>	None	Minor <sup>3</sup>	Potentially Significant		
a. Changes in the diversity, productivity or abundance of plant species (including trees, shrubs, grass, crops, and aquatic plants)?		X				4a.
b. Alteration of a plant community?		X				
c. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?		X				
d. Reduction in acreage or productivity of any agricultural land?		X				
e. Establishment or spread of noxious weeds?		X				4e.
f. <del>For P-R/D-J</del> , will the project affect wetlands, or prime and unique farmland?		X				
g. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

4a. No changes in existing plant life is anticipated.

4e. Weed management on this property is already accomplished via Fish, Wildlife and Parks in cooperation with the Cascade County weed management program and the Region Four Weed Management Program. Existing weed management practices will continue and be adhered to.



# **PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT**

< 5. <u>FISH/WILDLIFE</u>  Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT <sup>3</sup>				Can Impact Be Mitigated <sup>3</sup>	Comment Index
	Unknown <sup>3</sup>	None	Minor <sup>3</sup>	Potentially Significant		
a. Deterioration of critical fish or wildlife habitat?		X				
b. Changes in the diversity or abundance of game animals or bird species?		X				
c. Changes in the diversity or abundance of nongame species?		X				
d. Introduction of new species into an area?		X				
e. Creation of a barrier to the migration or movement of animals?		X				5e.
f. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?		X				
g. Increase in conditions that stress wildlife populations or limit abundance (including harassment, legal or illegal harvest or other human activity)?		X				
h. <del>For</del> For P-R/D-J, will the project be performed in any area in which T&E species are present, and will the project affect any T&E species or their habitat? (Also see 5f)		X				5h.
i. <del>For</del> For P-R/D-J, will the project introduce or export any species not presently or historically occurring in the receiving location? (Also see 5d)		X				
j. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

5e. No fencing is planned or anticipated that would impede wildlife and/or human activity on the parcel.

5h. Bald Eagles are often in the area during winter months. No Eagle nesting or resting habitat currently exist on this property so impacts to Bald Eagle populations are minimal. Since the public has been using this property for many years no additional impacts to T&E Species will occur due to this transaction.

## HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

6. <u>NOISE/ELECTRICAL EFFECTS</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT <sup>3</sup>				Can Impact Be Mitigated <sup>3</sup>	Comment Index
	Unknown <sup>3</sup>	None	Minor <sup>3</sup>	Potentially Significant		
a. Increases in existing noise levels?		X				
b. Exposure of people to serve or nuisance noise levels?		X				
c. Creation of electrostatic or electromagnetic effects that could be detrimental to human health or property?		X				
d. Interference with radio or television reception and operation?		X				
e. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

## HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

7. <u>LAND USE</u>  Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT <sup>3</sup>				Can Impact Be Mitigated <sup>3</sup>	Comment Index
	Unknown <sup>3</sup>	None	Minor <sup>3</sup>	Potentially Significant		
a. Alteration of, or interference with the productivity or profitability of the existing land use of an area?		X				
b. Conflicted with a designated natural area or area of unusual scientific or educational importance?		X				
c. Conflict with any existing land use whose presence would constrain or potentially prohibit the proposed action?		X				
d. Adverse effects on or relocation of residences?		X				
e. Other: _____		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

This proposed action is to clean up land ownership within the external boundaries of Giant Springs State Park. The lands under consideration are currently managed as park lands and provide a route for the River's Edge Trail. Park Visitors already consider this park land.

## HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

8. <u>RISK/HEALTH HAZARDS</u>  Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT <sup>3</sup>				Can Impact Be Mitigated <sup>3</sup>	Comment Index
	Unknown <sup>3</sup>	None	Minor <sup>3</sup>	Potentially Significant		
a. Risk of an explosion or release of hazardous substances (including, but not limited to oil, pesticides, chemicals, or radiation) in the event of an accident or other forms of disruption?		X				8a.
b. Affect an existing emergency response or emergency evacuation plan or create a need for a new plan?		X				
c. Creation of any human health hazard or potential hazard?		X				
d. <del>For</del> P-R/D-J, will any chemical toxicants be used? (Also see 8a)		X				
e. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

8a. An environmental assessment provided by Source Giant Springs, Inc. for the parcel, dated 1995, indicates that no hazardous substances are present. The environmental assessment is on-file at the R4 FWP Parks office available for review.

## HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

9. <u>COMMUNITY IMPACT</u>  Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT <sup>3</sup>				Can Impact Be Mitigated <sup>3</sup>	Comment Index
	Unknown <sup>3</sup>	None	Minor <sup>3</sup>	Potentially Significant		
a. Alteration of the location, distribution, density, or growth rate of the human population of an area?		X				
b. Alteration of the social structure of a community?		X				
c. Alteration of the level or distribution of employment or community or personal income?		X				
d. Changes in industrial or commercial activity?		X				
e. Increased traffic hazards or effects on existing transportation facilities or patterns of movement of people and goods?		X				
f. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

## HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

10. PUBLIC SERVICES/TAXES/UTILITIES  Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT <sup>3</sup>				Can Impact Be Mitigated <sup>3</sup>	Comment Index
	Unknown <sup>3</sup>	None	Minor <sup>3</sup>	Potentially Significant		
a. Will the proposed action have an effect upon or result in a need for new or altered governmental services in any of the following areas: fire or police protection, schools, parks/recreational facilities, roads or other public maintenance, water supply, sewer or septic systems, solid waste disposal, health, or other governmental services? If any, specify:		X				
b. Will the proposed action have an effect upon the local or state tax base and revenues?		X				
c. Will the proposed action result in a need for new facilities or substantial alterations of any of the following utilities: electric power, natural gas, other fuel supply or distribution systems, or communications?		X				
d. Will the proposed action result in increased used of any energy source?		X				
< e. Define projected revenue sources		X				10e.
< f. Define projected maintenance costs.		X				10f.
g. Other: _____		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

10e&f. Costs associated with this property have already been substantially absorbed by Fish, Wildlife and Parks. In 1994 this land was leased from Richard Bogden for recreational uses. Fish, Wildlife and Parks then obtained a 20 year trail easement recorded January 24, 1997 from Bogden's purchaser - Source Giant Springs, Inc.. These leases and easements gave Fish, Wildlife and Parks the right to construct and maintain the River's Edge Trail through the property. With the River's Edge Trail came the responsibility to manage weeds and other visitor impacts. Since trail use is the dominant use of these lands, the costs associated with the fee title transfer of the property to FWP are negligible.

## HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

11. <u>AESTHETICS/RECREATION</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT <sup>3</sup>				Can Impact Be Mitigated <sup>3</sup>	Comment Index
	Unknown <sup>3</sup>	None	Minor <sup>3</sup>	Potentially Significant		
a. Alteration of any scenic vista or creation of an aesthetically offensive site or effect that is open to public view?		X				
b. Alteration of the aesthetic character of a community or neighborhood?		X				
<c. Alteration of the quality or quantity of recreational or tourism opportunities and settings? (Attach Tourism Report)		X				
d. <del>For P-R/D-J</del> , will any designated or proposed wild or scenic rivers, trails or wilderness areas be impacted? (Also see 11a, 11c)		X				
e. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

## HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

12. <u>CULTURAL/HISTORICAL RESOURCES</u>  Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT <sup>3</sup>				Can Impact Be Mitigated <sup>3</sup>	Comment Index
	Unknown <sup>3</sup>	None	Minor <sup>3</sup>	Potentially Significant		
<a. Destruction or alteration of any site, structure or object of prehistoric historic, or paleontological importance?		X				12a.
b. Physical change that would affect unique cultural values?		X				
c. Effects on existing religious or sacred uses of a site or area?		X				
d. <del>For P-R/D-J</del> , will the project affect historic or cultural resources? <b>Attach SHPO letter of clearance.</b> (Also see 12.a)		X				
e. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

12a. There are no plans to alter, modify, or develop this property by FWP. If cultural sites exist on the property, they will become the responsibility of FWP and subject to protection under the State Antiquities Act.



## HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

13. SUMMARY EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE  Will the proposed action, considered as a whole:	IMPACT <sup>3</sup>				Can Impact Be Mitigated <sup>3</sup>	Comment Index
	Unknown <sup>3</sup>	None	Minor <sup>3</sup>	Potentially Significant		
a. Have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (A project or program may result in impacts on two or more separate resources which create a significant effect when considered together or in total.)		X				
b. Involve potential risks or adverse effects which are uncertain but extremely hazardous if they were to occur?		X				
c. Potentially conflict with the substantive requirements of any local, state, or federal law, regulation, standard or formal plan?		X				
d. Establish a precedent or likelihood that future actions with significant environmental impacts will be proposed?		X				
e. Generate substantial debate or controversy about the nature of the impacts that would be created?		X				
f. <del>For P-R/D-J</del> , is the project expected to have organized opposition or generate substantial public controversy? (Also see 13e)		X				
g. <del>For P-R/D-J</del> , list any federal or state permits required.		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

**1. Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives (including the no action alternative) to the proposed action whenever alternatives are reasonably available and prudent to consider and a discussion of how the alternatives would be implemented:**

***No Action.***

Land will remain in private ownership, subject to development, sale or any other use.

***Project as proposed.***

The preferred alternative: this alternative will achieve the benefits of full public ownership in perpetuity of the last piece of land north of the railroad track within the boundaries of Giant Springs State Park.

**2. Evaluation and listing of mitigation, stipulation, or other control measures enforceable by the agency or another government agency:**

No mitigation is necessary.

**3. Based on the significance criteria evaluated in this EA, is an EIS required? If an EIS is not required, explain why the EA is the appropriate level of analysis for this proposed action:**

An EIS is not required.

With no anticipated significant impacts to the environment or the public the EA is the appropriate level of analysis for this land donation.

**4. Describe the level of public involvement for this project if any and, given the complexity and the seriousness of the environmental issues associated with the proposed action, is the level of public involvement appropriate under the circumstances?**

The public comment period will extend for thirty (30) days following the publication of the second legal notice in the Great Falls Tribune and Helena Independent Record.

Written comments will be accepted until 5:00 p.m. Friday, March 7, 2003 and can be mailed to the address below:

Source Giant Springs Land Donation  
4600 Giant Springs Road  
Great Falls, MT 59405

Or emailed to: [dsmith@state.mt.us](mailto:dsmith@state.mt.us)

- 5. Duration of comment period if any.**  
30 days

**6. Name, title, address and phone number of the Person(s) Responsible for Preparing the EA:**

Dan Smith  
Park Operations Supervisor  
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks  
4600 Giant Springs Road  
Great Falls, MT 59405

(406) 454-5858

**PART III. NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT**

Source Giant Springs, Inc., the Giant Spring Heritage Park Commission and FWP support this transaction. It will cost Fish, Wildlife and Parks virtually nothing to acquire the last remaining in-holding north of the railroad tracks. Weed control of the Source Giant Springs, Inc. acreage will continue by FWP as it has in the past.

This transaction represents an effort by Source Giant Springs, Inc. and FWP to enhance both the public's interest in open space complementing the Lewis & Clark experience and create a more functional relationship with the spring water source and its distribution.

This land is currently managed substantially as part of Giant Springs State Park by FWP. This transaction permanently includes the land in the State Park. To not formalize this transaction would put several park features in peril.

1. The River's Edge Trail – with only a 20 year easement FWP does not have long-term control. 25% of that twenty-year easement is already gone.
2. The Giant Springs State Park area management plan emphasizes open space. Without ownership of this land FWP faces the possibility of development in one of the most scenic areas of the park.

Both of these potential problems could severely impact park resources.